

**REMARKS**

**Status of the claims:**

With the above amendments, claims 1, 5, and 14 have been amended. Claims 1-3, 5-6, 13, and 14 are pending. Claim 5 has been amended by making it independent by adding the elements from the claims from which claim 5 depended (i.e., claims 2 and 1). Claim 5 has also been amended to re-insert two members of the Markush group (i.e., calcium pyrophosphate and calcium glycerophosphate) that are neither taught nor suggested by the cited prior art (i.e., Relyveld '686). Claim 1 has been amended to insert one additional member to the Markush group, which is neither disclosed nor suggested by the cited art. Claim 14 has been amended by omitting "alkaline earth metal". Entry of the amendments and reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

**Conversation with the Examiner**

In a conversation held with the Examiner on January 15, 2004, Applicants inquired if the claims could be amended as appears above. The Examiner indicated that he had already issued a Notice of Allowability with the claims as appears in that paper. However, the Examiner did indicate a willingness to enter a 37 CFR §1.312 amendment in connection with Applicants' request (with the claims as appear above).

Accordingly, Applicants believe that the claims, as they now stand, define allowable subject matter such that publication of the claims as they appear in this amendment is warranted. A Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

If any questions remain regarding the above matters, please contact Applicant's representative, T. Benjamin Schroeder (Reg. No. 50,990), in the Washington metropolitan area at the phone number listed below.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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